

From: SPadgett@ggmitg.com@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/5/01 3:51pm
Subject: From a small business owner: Settlement is in all our best interests

I am adding one voice to what I hope will be many in supporting your pursuit of settlement in this case. I was relieved last week to see the Attorney General's announcement of a tentative settlement, but very concerned this morning when I read on the CNN site that several of the State's Attorney's Generals are not sure they can support the settlement. I would strongly suggest that American business and the public at large needs this case settled.

I am an owner of a small IT consulting and integration business with what I think is a fairly objective view of Microsoft and the rest of the IT industry. I use Microsoft products but use a wide variety of other vendors' products also; I am neither a Microsoft detractor nor fervent supporter. I am by no means an expert in the law, but I am a strong believer in upholding the law. If Microsoft broke the law, they should be held accountable. However, as it seems to have been the case in so many of the big anti-trust actions of the information age, the complexity of the cases can almost overwhelm the real issues. I feel that this happened from the beginning in this case, along with far too many emotions and big egos at play. This is not about significant moral and social issues; it's just computer hardware and software, in the end only tools.

The real issue in my mind is that we the knowledgeable consumers of this technology can and do make informed, and often very clever, decisions based on the quality and effectiveness of a product or service. We are able to make those decisions regardless of whether that product was offered in a way that may, technically, conflict with anti-trust laws. For example, Microsoft licensing has been an issue in this case. If I am considering a Microsoft product for a client where, in my opinion, the licensing is "unfair" or not advantageous to the client, I will recommend against the product, AND FIND ANOTHER SOLUTION FROM THE VAST ARRAY AVAILABLE. I am convinced that even if that licensing were found to be in violation of anti-trust laws, no remedies will significantly impact that decision I make and the resulting solution I choose.

After decrying the emotions that seem to have been involved in this trial, I will say that I feel (granted without much factual backup) that the way this case was brought about, the deplorable way the press was used to hype the various factions, helped to hasten the slide of the technology sector in the economy. Many of the dot-com balloons were going to deflate, we all knew that, but this case seemed to stick a pin in them instead of allowing gradual deflation. So as I have seen business conditions get tight, companies lay off good people, and our 401K's crater, I have a certain amount of anger over this case. Especially because in the end, once again, the marketplace populated by very bright and resourceful people, will

decide the real fate of Microsoft. Please don't let this settlement get away, for all of us.

Thank you,
Stan Padgett
President,
GGM Information Technology Group, Inc.
843-824-0908